

TRANSPARENT SWITCHED ACCESS TO NETWORK ATTACHED STORAGE**ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to transparent access to network attached storage devices, configured to any of several protocols, such as SCSI over IP, NAS or NASD. In particular, the present invention provides for using a switch to transparently aggregate storage devices. The switch appears as a virtual storage device. It responds to requests to initiate file sessions and selects one of a plurality of storage devices to participate in the file session. A file session can be handed off to a different storage device. Both the setup and handoff are transparent to the client and its TCP/IP client. The present invention may be practiced either as a method or device. It may provide a virtual storage device or it may aggregate storage devices already attached to a network.